

Lanesboro City Council
Monday, October 19th, 2009
Council Chambers at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Rahn, O'Connor, Dybing, Jeannette and Allen

Absent: None

Visitors: Julia Borgen, Amy Steinfeldt and Medical Assistant, Jeff Schwichtenberg, Andy Drake, Jon and Barb Willford, Jade Wangen, Jan Meyer and Brian Luna

PUBLIC HEARING:

The public hearing for the junk ordinance was called to order by Mayor Rahn. Mayor Rahn asked for those that are here for the hearing to state their questions or concerns.

Amy Steinfeldt was assisted by a medical aid due to a recent accident; she stated that the snowmobiles are now on a licensed trailer so she asked what else she needed to do. Vickerman stated that as long as the snowmobile trailer was legally licensed, that the snowmobiles are fine. Vickerman stated that it was the snowmobiles in the yard that were of concern.

Jeff Schwichtenberg stated that he was concerned with the process and felt that the staff has better things to do with their time than seeking out properties with junk. He also noted that he felt the letter was too threatening that maybe a call or a first letter notifying the property owner, rather than just sending out a letter stating that a person is in violation, because as a property owner he was offended.

Jon and Barb Willford both noted that they felt that by doing the junk ordinance in this manner that you are seeking to find issues. He noted that he has made numerous improvements to his property and has worked hard at it. He stated that he felt construction materials on the side of the building that are used to keep the trailers from rolling is very minimal and felt that the whole process was too picky and that the City is seeking out trouble. Willford noted that he has seen in minutes from past council meetings that the Council is looking for ways to cut, but sending two staff people out to do the tour and then the Administrator's time that has been spent on the letters and fielding calls has to be a lot. He also noted that office time, letters, pictures and postage was also wasted, for areas that should and could have been overlooked. Willford also noted that he took pictures himself of City property that needed to be cleaned up and gave them to Vickerman. He said as long as the City is looking for areas to clean up that they should look at some of their own property as well.

Mayor Rahn noted that the staff was just doing their job and that the Council is more than willing to look at other ways to enforce the junk ordinance, such as a Council member rotating in for the junk tour.

Schwichtenberg suggested that maybe the Council would do the tour or that a notice be put in the utility bills noting when the junk tour would be so people would focus on cleaning up their properties. Schwichtenberg noted that he felt that the junk tour went too far, with letter going out to 10% of the population. He stated that it created a bigger issue than needed to be with the letter that was sent.

Allen noted that she received complaints about property that needed to be cleaned up, noting that having the junk ordinance is consistent with what the community wants, however she does feel that there are always ways to do things better. She noted that she would like to see a Councilmember or the mayor participate in the process.

O'Connor noted that since he is been in office, the most common complaint is about junk. He noted that he feels that an ordinance is necessary, but revision to the ordinance and constantly finding ways to do things better is a positive approach to this issue. He stated that he feels the letter could be kinder, but also noted that the intent of the entire process is to make the community a healthier and safer place to live. He feels that the entire program is worthwhile and that it can be done in a better and positive manner.

ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING:

After no further comments, O'Connor made the motion to close the public hearing, second Dybing, motion carried.

REGULAR MEETING:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rahn.

Additions or Changes to the agenda consisted of adding safety program, signs for snow removal, Chamber report from Brian Luna and Lanesboro listed as one of Forbes Traveler's "America's Prettiest Towns". Dybing made a motion to approve the agenda with those changes, second Allen, motion carried.

The meeting minutes for the October 5th meeting were approved with a motion by Jeannette, second Allen, motion carried.

PERSONS WITH BUSINESS BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

A. Andy Drake, Street Superintendent – Snow Removal Signs: Drake asked to have no parking signs for the downtown area to list No parking 2am – 7am, so that the police have the capability of ticketing vehicles prior to going off of their shift. It was noted to have it published in the paper if there is a change. Dybing made a motion to have Drake order and put up no parking signs in the downtown area for 2am-7am during the snow removal season, second Dybing, motion carried.

B. Brian Luna, Chamber – Holiday open House, Kiosk and Trees: Luna thanked the Council for the staff removing the dead tree and donation box, noting that it was a vast improvement. Luna also noted that the Chamber is sponsoring the Holiday open house for November 21st and 22nd to which businesses will have specials, a candlelight walk and the B&B's will be having a Christmas Inn tour. Luna also noted that they are still working on the kiosk and information areas.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEETINGS:

A. Library: October 12th – Allen: Allen noted that the Friends' used book sale made \$642.51 and that the scholastic book fair would be coming up before Thanksgiving. She noted that the Library Board is looking for ideas on how to honor and remember Rose Bell for all of her contributions to the library.

B. Park: October 14th – Rahn: Rahn noted that the Park Board recommended approving the Tree quote; due to the fact that most funds would be coming from the TMI. He also informed the Council that the grant that was written for \$35,000 for playground equipment, tennis court resurfacing and fencing was granted to the Park Board, the funds came from the Rochester Area Foundation and it was the money that was raised by the Root River Recreation group. Rahn informed the public about the Park Board's upcoming fundraiser in January to raise funds for the curtains in the gymnasium on the stage; the Board will be having a bean bag tournament towards the end of January.

C. Habitat for Humanity: October 7th – Vickerman: Rahn noted that Vickerman attended on his behalf, because he could not attend. Vickerman noted that they are working on getting people interested in volunteering on a steering committee for a house to be built in Fillmore County. First job is to find a location or lot that is either donated or sold for a small amount. Vickerman noted that the next meeting will be held in Lanesboro on Tuesday, November 10th at 6pm in the Council Chambers and that they are hoping for a good turnout.

HOUSEKEEPING:

A. Tree Quote: O'Connor made a motion to accept the proposal with the removal of the tree replacement by the office, second Jeannette, motion carried.

B. Park Grant: Rahn made a motion to accept the \$35,000 grant from the Rochester Area Foundation noting that the project costs would be spent as follows: \$23,000 towards playground equipment, \$10,000 for tennis court resurfacing and \$2,000 towards fencing, second Dybing, motion carried. Rahn noted that this is great news and thanked Vickerman for writing the grant.

C. Junk Ordinance: O'Connor noted that he would be willing to work with another council member to work on ideas to implement a beautification project that would include the Chamber in the efforts to keep the community cleaned up; Allen volunteered as well to help in this area.

D. Heritage Preservation Commission Annual Meeting Report: Vickerman went over Jensson's report on this year's conference. She also noted that Jensson stated he would be interested in revamping and reconstituting the HPC. O'Connor made a motion to accept and support Jensson's efforts to reconstitute the HPC, second by Dybing adding that he thanked Jensson for his willingness to do this and for attending the conference, motion carried.

E. Copy Machine Quote: Vickerman explained how the change in billing with the new software has massively increased the use of the copy machine and that the model in use is not capable of handling the work load. O'Connor made a suggestion to look into other companies and what they can offer, Vickerman stated she would seek out other companies and find out who other businesses in town are using for their copy machine needs.

F. Ambulance Mileage: Vickerman noted that the billing company had contacted her noting that the Medicare approved mileage rate is \$10.41/mile and that Lanesboro is billing \$9.50. Dybing made a motion to increase the mileage rate effective immediately, second Jeannette, motion carried.

G. Employee Meeting Report: Vickerman noted that the employees are trying to seek out options for health insurance noting that their rates will be at the highest possible rates either this year or next due to medical needs within the group. The employees also met about the safety program and are asking council to approve a quarterly safety program. The group also discussed pay wages noting that they would like to stick with wage freezes even though LGA did not get taken away, noting that it is the right thing to do for the community.

H. Safety Program: Vickerman noted that the estimate provided by MMUA would be to handle all aspects of the safety program with quarterly training. Jeannette made a motion to approve the safety program at \$3,400, second Dybing, motion carried.

I. Wood Burning Stoves: Allen made a motion that he would like to see an ordinance drafted based on the City of Kennedy example as a form of discussion for the next meeting, noting that this required a certain stack height and no burning stoves within 500 feet of neighboring properties, O'Connor seconded for discussion. After different discussion Allen revised her motion to prepare a proposed ordinance for solid fuel stoves and implementing a moratorium until ordinance is implemented, asking that a ordinance be presented at the next meeting, second O'Connor motion carried. Jeannette noted that he felt that they were putting the cart before the horse and that some property owners would not be happy.

J. Storm Water Assessment Survey: Vickerman asked the Council to read it over and that we will send it out to see if any funds are available to implement one of the options, noting that the survey has been sent to the Fillmore County Soil and Water. Allen noted that she felt it was a very good report.

K. Facility Bonds: Vickerman noted that this would be a possible bonding tool for a private entity, noting that the grocery store may be a good fit. She pointed out that the County was allotted money from the recovery funds and that they have asked Cities if they have any projects that could be funded. Vickerman noted that this type of bonding could assist a person in lower interest rates for the grocery store. Vickerman asked the Council to have the EDA review and that she would be sure that Chris Gastner (Fillmore County EDA) and Mike Bubany (David Drown and Associates) would be available for questions at the EDA meeting. Rahn made a motion to have the EDA review this possibility and for a recommendation to be made at the next meeting, second Jeannette, motion carried.

L. America's Prettiest Towns: O'Connor gave copies of the print out from the internet site from Yahoo called Forbes Traveler, which sited Lanesboro as one of seven of America's prettiest towns.

M. Citizens' Comments: Julia Borgen noted that she was impressed with Vickerman's knowledge and stated that Lanesboro is lucky to have her. A compliment was also given to Jan Meyer in the audience for her honor flight article, noting it was tremendous.

ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING:

With no further business at 7:14pm, O'Connor made a motion to adjourn, second Allen, motion carried.

CLOSED MEETING:

Mayor Rahn called the closed meeting to order:

A Closed meeting was held for the City Administrator's 6th year review, a summary will be presented at the next meeting.

ADJOURN CLOSED MEETING:

At 7:29pm, Rahn made a motion to close the closed meeting, second Dybing, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbie Vickerman
City Administrator/Clerk